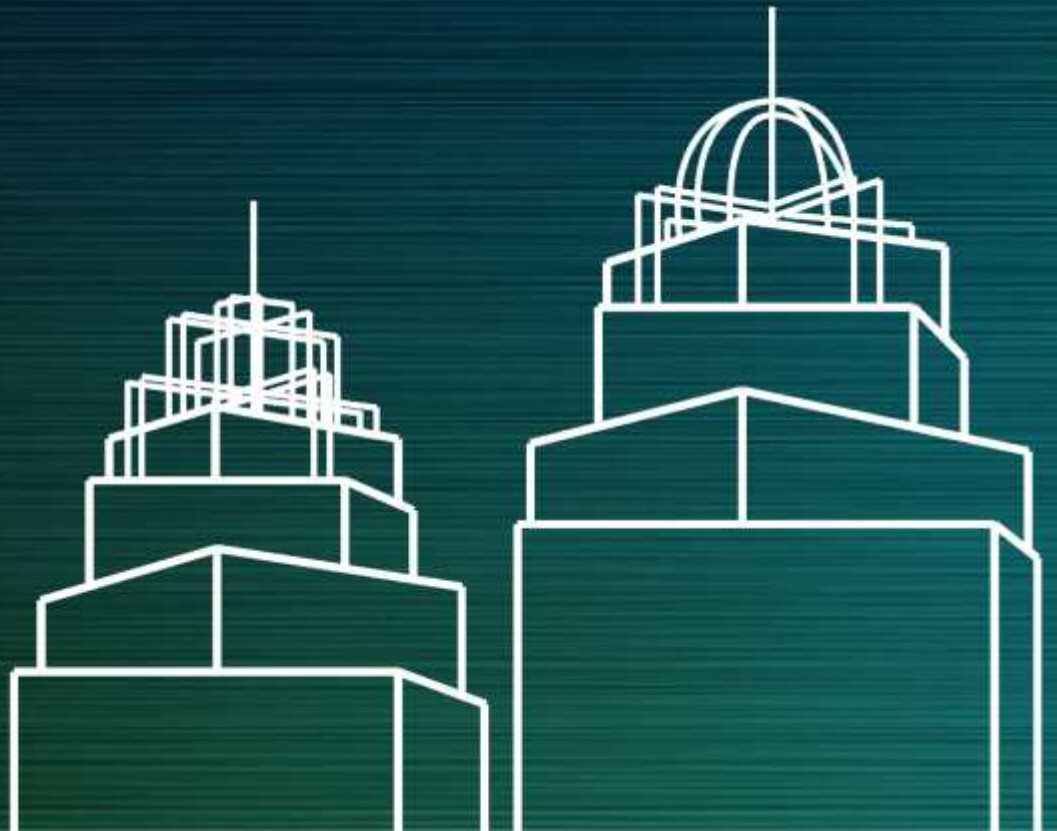


# False Alarm Ordinance

May 2017



## False Alarms in Sandy Springs

- In 2012, Sandy Springs passed an ordinance to reduce false alarms requiring alarm users to register with the city.
- The number of false alarms to summon the police department has decreased from 12,381 in 2013 to 9,292 in 2016.
- However, there is still a real cost from excessive false alarms.
- In 2016, emergency response to false fire and police alarms cost the City approximately **\$775,939**.

### FIRE:

**974** false alarms

X \$675 per call\*

**\$657,450**

### POLICE:

**9,292** false alarms (4,424 man hours)

X \$26.66 per man hour\*

**\$117,943**

- Further, there is a lost-opportunity cost when officers respond to false alarms and are not available for legitimate threats to public safety or other duties.

\*Based on SSFD and SSPD estimates

## Existing Ordinance

- Focus on the alarm user
- Provides civil fines to the alarm user and collection (including escalating fines for false alarms)
- Requires users to register alarm systems with the City and provide the permit number to the alarm company
- Sets criteria for temporarily suspending City emergency response if the user does not pay fines or take corrective action
- Requires alarm companies to inform users of the City's ordinance and requirements.
- No fines against alarm companies
- Fine collections and appeals put an administrative burden on the City.

## Revised ordinance focuses on the alarm companies

- Ensures that alarm companies are registered with the city
- Enforces existing state law with regard to enhanced verification
- Establishes additional verification requirements for video monitored burglar alarms
- Fines the alarm company for noncompliance
- Additional provisions to increase the safety and reliability of alarm systems:
  - Prohibiting single action non-recessed buttons on panic & hold-up alarms
  - 5 year amortization period for compliance

## Increasing accountability of alarm companies

An alarm company must register with the City's agent (Cry Wolf)



City's agent issues a permit number to the alarm company (requires list of all current users)



The alarm company must apply for sub permit number for each new user



If an alarm company doesn't provide a permit number for the user when requesting dispatch, they can be fined.

**After 4 false alarms from an alarm site in a 24-month period, emergency personnel will no longer respond to calls from that site for one year (registered or unregistered)**

# SANDY SPRINGS

## Existing Fine Schedule- User

### Excessive Police False Alarms

<b>1-2</b>	<b>No Charge</b>
3-5	\$50.00
6	\$100.00
7	\$150.00
8	\$250.00
9	\$350.00
10 & over	\$500.00
Failure to register	\$100.00

### Excessive Fire False Alarms

<b>1</b>	<b>No Charge</b>
2-9	\$250.00
10 & over	\$500.00
Failure to register	\$100.00

## New Fine Schedule- Alarm Company

### Excessive Police or Fire False Alarms

<b>1</b>	<b>No Charge</b>
2-3	\$250.00
4 & over	\$500.00

### Excessive Fire False Alarms

Failure to register alarm company	\$500.00
Failure to register alarm	\$500.00
Failure to provide dispatch w/ permit #	\$500.00
Failure to maintain or present records	\$500.00
Installation of non-recessed holdup or panic alarm button	\$500.00
Unlicensed installation or repair of alarm systems	\$500.00
Failure to timely notify the city of changes to the alarm company's user database	\$500.00

## Conclusion

- Staff is seeking feedback from Council on next steps.
- Effective September 1, 2017
- Roll-out to include:
  - Messaging
  - Press-releases
  - Lunch-and-learns for alarm companies